

BOOK REVIEW

PROJECTIONS LUMINEUSES: MOLTENI, RADIGUET & MASSIOT SUCCESEURS

1 – Appareils et Accessoires

Patrice Guérin

Club Niépce Lumière

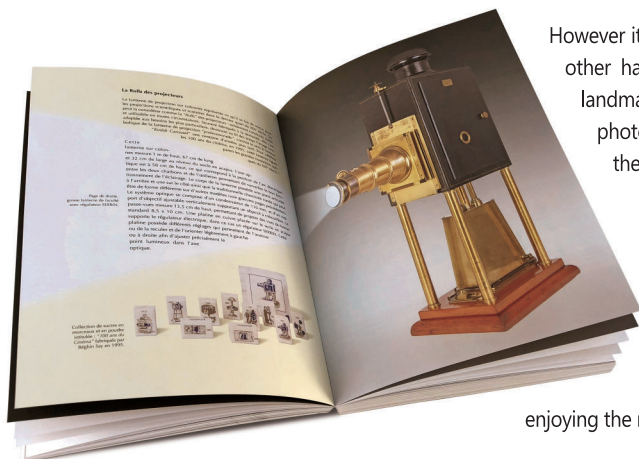
Published December 2017

ISBN 979-10-91258-08-1

Paperback, 340 pages

The first Molteni (or Molteno – of Italian origin) arrived in France around 1780 and set up business as a dealer in optical instruments in 1782. Molteni may – or may not – have supplied Étienne-Gaspard Robertson with the fantoscope for his legendary phantasmagoria shows in Paris in the 1790s. In his book *Traité Général des Projections* published in 1897, Eugène Trutat believes so, but the first mention of a fantoscope in a Molteni catalogue is 1859. The company stayed in the Molteni family until Alfred Molteni sold the business to Radiguet and Massiot in 1899. Patrice Guérin's new book includes the activities of these successors who continued the business of producing high quality lanterns, slides and optical equipment as well as, in later years, cinematographic equipment.

This volume – the first of a projected four – describes all the equipment and accessories produced by the Molteni company and its successors.



However it goes much further than that suggests, with full descriptions of the lanterns and other hardware, biographies, as well as sections describing major developments and landmarks, the history and use of the various items. For example, there are sections on photographic enlargement and the use of large lanterns (mainly triunials) in the theatre and opera during the 1920s and 1930s.

Throughout the book, on every page, there are colour illustrations and high quality photographs of lanterns and other equipment from public and private collections. The sheer amount of research in the text and images is breathtaking. Although it is written in French (it would be wonderful to see an English edition one day), it is relatively easy to follow with a modest knowledge of the subject because with more than 600 images, including 60 full-page photographs, you can look through it purely for pleasure, enjoying the many aspects of the magic lantern displayed. At 58 Euros it seems good value.

Mary Ann Auckland

A WELL-GUARDED COLLECTION

Lester Smith

Last summer, I visited Carisbrooke Castle (English Heritage) on the Isle of Wight. The castle has been a symbol of power and defence for over 1000 years and is where Charles I was held before his execution in 1649. Among its many interesting features – including a 16th-century treadmill for donkeys that was used to raise water – we discovered a room dedicated to John Milne (1850–1913), the father of modern seismology.

From 1876 to 1895 John Milne worked in Tokyo where he became interested in earthquakes and how to measure them. Returning to the UK in 1895 Milne set up a seismic observatory on the Isle of Wight and managed a global network of seismometers, publishing the *Slide Circulars* on seismic activity. After Milne's death in 1913, his work was continued, eventually resulting in the International Seismological Centre that still operates today.

During Milne's stay in Tokyo, he photographed and made lantern slides of local life, apparently painting them himself. The slides on show

looked extremely professional and I was very impressed with the quality of the photography and painting.

